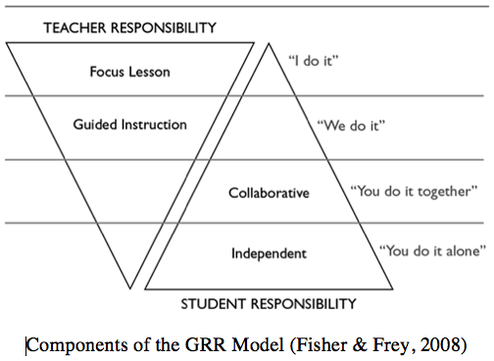
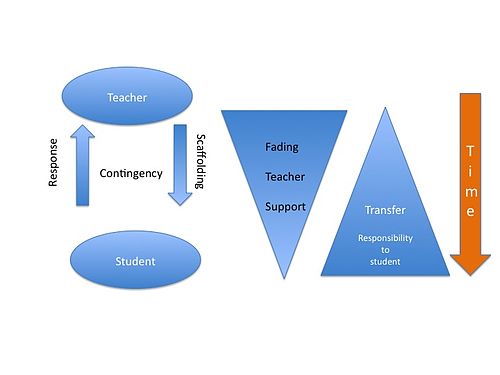
SCAFFOLDING



Scaffolding was first introduced in the late 1950s by Jerome Brunner, a cognitive psychologist. It is the guidance or structure provided by a more competent individual such as a teachers or a peer to help an individual perform a task in their Zone of proximal development (ZDP). Vygotsky introduced ZDP, a concept which refers to the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. In Vygotsky's words, “what a child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211). Bark and Winsler stated “for scaffolding to take place, the activity needs to be for the learner's own intentions, i.e. a task that he or she sets for themselves. The scaffold must also operate within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development, working at the learner's level of comprehension and drawing the learning into new areas of exploration (1995). For example when a mathematics teacher introduce an unfamiliar topic, she/he begins by explaining the concepts, illustrate by examples and then assign a math problem to check understanding. The examples illustrated by the teacher, are guidelines to help students understand so they can independently develop solutions to similar problems.



Hammond argued that “Teachers through their sequencing of teaching activities, and through the quality of their support and guidance, are able to challenge and extend what students are able to do. It is by participating in such activities that students are pushed beyond their current abilities and level of understanding, it is then that learning occurs and students are able to internalize new understanding (2001). One characteristic of scaffolding is that the scaffold is gradually withdrawn as the learner becomes more competent (Bark and Winsler, 1995). It should not be used constantly and it should gradually be eliminated when the students no longer needs it.

Scaffolding is like an external structure that provides support to the workers when bilding a house, that is, a place where they can stand until the building itself is strong enough to support them. As building gains stability, the scaffolding becomes less necessary and it's gradually a removed. Similarly an adult guiding a child through a new task may initially provide scaffolding to support the child's efforts. Scaffolding in education serves as the provision of sufficient support to promote learning when concepts and skills are first introduced to students. Scaffolding is an effective strategy to use because it provides the fundamental concept needed to build competence. When students are introduced to new task without conceptual knowledge or without effort from their teacher to explain the relational concept, they are likely to do poorly. Through scaffolding better understanding is developed and students are able to invent long lasting strategy and skill needed to expedite results. Scaffolding can be done in various ways such: helping students develop a plan for dealing with a new task by divided a task into several smaller pieces; when teachers gives guidelines for completing a task; and when a teacher asked questions to clarify students’ understanding. Mercer (1994) suggested that teachers find the concept of scaffolding appealing because it resonates with their intuitive conceptions of what it means to intervene successfully in students’ learning.

Depending on student’s particular knowledge and abilities, different grades may need different kinds of scaffolding to support their success in accomplishing a task. Scaffolding is ideally modified to nurture newly emerging skills. Overtime the scaffolding gradually phased out and students can complete an entire task on their own and reach an even higher level of thinking.

Reference

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February, 2015.